



EPA Brownfields Assessment Demonstration Pilot

El Paso, TX

Outreach and Special Projects Staff (5105)

Quick Reference Fact Sheet

EPA's Brownfields Economic Redevelopment Initiative is designed to empower states, communities, and other stakeholders in economic redevelopment to work together in a timely manner to prevent, assess, and safely clean up brownfields to promote their sustainable reuse. Brownfields are abandoned, idled, or under-used industrial and commercial facilities where expansion or redevelopment is complicated by real or perceived environmental contamination. EPA is funding: assessment demonstration pilot programs (each funded up to \$200,000 over two years, with additional funding provided for greenspace) to test assessment models and facilitate coordinated assessment and cleanup efforts at the federal, state, tribal, and local levels; and job training pilot programs (each funded up to \$200,000 over two years) to provide training for residents of communities affected by brownfields to facilitate cleanup of brownfields sites and prepare trainees for future employment in the environmental field; and, cleanup revolving loan fund program (each funded up to \$1,000,000 over five years) to provide financial assistance for the environmental cleanup of brownfields. These pilot programs are intended to provide EPA, states, tribes, municipalities, and communities with useful information and strategies as they continue to seek new methods to promote a unified approach to site assessment, environmental cleanup, and redevelopment.

BACKGROUND

EPA has selected the City of El Paso for a Brownfields Assessment Pilot. El Paso is located in the southwest corner of Texas on the border with Mexico. The city has targeted portions of the 10.8-square mile downtown area, known as *El Corazón de El Paso*, the heart of El Paso, and other historic residential, manufacturing, and industrial areas in the city for brownfields redevelopment. The area has an estimated population of over 57,000. The downtown area includes a large railroad facility and through rail lines. The city also borders the Rio Grande, an American Heritage River. In the past, this ready access to rail and river transportation attracted a number of industrial and commercial businesses to the area. In recent years, many of these businesses have been abandoned. In addition to the downtown, a number of industrial areas nearby have declined since the 1960s. All of these areas are located within a federal Empowerment Zone. More than 58 percent of the Zone's population have incomes below the poverty level, and 95 percent belong to minority groups.

PILOT SNAPSHOT



El Paso, Texas

Date of Announcement:
April 2001

Amount: \$200,000

Profile: The Pilot targets a four-block section of downtown El Paso and an area in South Central El Paso for Phase I and Phase II environmental site assessments. It also proposes developing a brownfields inventory of properties in South Central El Paso to support future efforts.

Contacts:

City of El Paso
(915) 541-4680

Regional Brownfields Team
U.S. EPA - Region 6
(214) 665-6736

Visit the EPA Region 6 Brownfields web site at:
<http://www.epa.gov/earth1r6/6sf/bfpages/sfbfhome.htm>

For further information, including specific Pilot contacts, additional Pilot information, brownfields news and events, and publications and links, visit the EPA Brownfields web site at:
<http://www.epa.gov/brownfields/>

OBJECTIVES

El Paso's primary objective is to revive two areas in the Empowerment Zone. These areas contain a number of abandoned properties that are the object of development efforts by stakeholder groups. The city hopes to team with these groups to speed up the redevelopment process. In addition to facilitating the redevelopment of abandoned properties, the city intends to establish green areas to attract new residents and tourists. The Pilot will encourage redevelopment by assessing properties in the downtown and South Central El Paso areas, and by establishing an inventory that will support future planning for the redevelopment of potential brownfields in the city.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND ACTIVITIES

Activities planned as part of this Pilot include:

- Conducting Phase I and Phase II environmental site assessments;
- Inventorying potential brownfields sites in the downtown and South Central El Paso areas;
- Involving community groups and individuals in brownfields site identification, assessment, and cleanup planning; and
- Coordinating the existing stakeholder organizations to maximize their effectiveness in redeveloping targeted areas.

The cooperative agreement for this Pilot has not yet been negotiated; therefore, activities described in this fact sheet are subject to change.